

July 12, 2007

North Carolina Division of Water Quality
NC Environmental Management Commission

Gentlemen:

RE: Water Supply Nutrient Strategy for B. Everett Jordan Reservoir

Good Evening. I am Loyse Hurley, President of Chatham Citizens for Effective Communities (CCEC). I live at 16 Matchwood in Pittsboro. Chatham Citizens for Effective Communities is a grassroots citizens organization who's purpose is to empower Chatham citizens to enhance Chatham's future. We have over 2000 people in Chatham County who are involved with our organization.

As you are aware, Jordan Lake is the source of drinking water for Chatham County as well as other down stream municipalities. We have watched the deterioration of this valuable water source over the years. In 2006, you declared Jordan Lake impaired. It is now 2007, and here we are, still "talking instead of acting". This degradation comes from point and non-point discharge sources including the up stream discharges of both nitrogen and phosphorous from sewage treatment plants. Stormwater runoff from both massive development and agricultural operations also contribute to the problem. This load on the lake has increased the nutrient levels with subsequent algae build up.

Chatham has just imposed a 1 year moratorium on residential development. Currently, the County is reviewing and up grading our ordinances, which include imposing more vigorous buffer requirements for the protection of Jordan Lake. This up grade of our ordinances will contain better protections for the watershed. Can the state do less? How long must we wait?

Our citizens are paying for the treatment of our lake water. They are concerned by the increase in trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids and total organic carbon, caused by the organics in the raw water and the necessary treatment. They are frightened and angry about their impact on their families health. The lake is also a recreational source which is rapidly becoming an unpleasant experience. We are appalled when we see the mess caused by the algae and sediment build up.

Remember, there is no health risk or individual cost up stream. We the citizens downstream have been paying! We've been paying by our increased costs and the potential damage to our health for their continued excused lack of responsibility for the damage already caused. Time has run out. The state is the only one who has the power to prevent this situation. It is time for you to act! We drink this water! Up streamers do not!

It's already been 10 years since the NC Clean Water Responsibility Act provided you with the authority to start to implement nutrient reduction. Yes, the point source discharge operations up stream may have to incur large expenditures of monies to achieve nutrient reduction and they are understandable resistant. The original date for compliance was 2011. Now, the state is contemplating extending the compliance date even further into the future because of pressure from these up stream municipalities. You are now proposing a 2016 implementation date. Allowing this to continue 5 more years is a travesty. This is absurd! How long do we, the citizens who drink this water, have to wait?

THESE ARE OUR REQUESTS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION:

1. Maintain the 2011 date. No compromises. No extension.
2. Place the dischargers and others involved on a fast track compliance schedule.
3. Be specific in your requirements for the counties and municipalities to institute more rigid ordinances regarding streams and buffers to protect from run off from both existing and future developments and from agriculture.

Save Jordan Lake! And save it now! WE CAN'T WAIT!

Thank you,

Loyse Hurley - President